

Work Task E4:	Planet Ranch, Bill Williams River
Partners:	Arizona Game & Fish Department (AGFD) City of Scottsdale (Scottsdale) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)
Point of Contact:	Nathan Lenon, LC-2457 (702) 293-8015
Purpose:	Collect data on the Bill Williams River corridor and to evaluate the potential for restoration on Planet Ranch
Conservation Measures:	Potential site for creation of habitat for covered species.
Long-Term Goal:	Habitat creation.
Location:	Bill Williams River
FY05 Estimate:	\$100,000. Funding is for in-house staff costs and contractor services.
Project Description:	<p>Planet Ranch is located on the Bill Williams River floodplain, immediately upstream and adjacent to the Bill Williams National Wildlife Refuge. The property is approximately 8,400 acres in total, approximately 2,400 acres of which are agricultural land with a 6 acre-foot/acre water entitlement. The total annual water entitlement for the site is 14,400 acre-feet.</p> <p>The property is currently owned by the City of Scottsdale. The ranch had been actively farmed for alfalfa, which has been discontinued for several years now. Conversion of the ranch from alfalfa farming to MSCP-habitat types would result in a decreased amount of consumptive-use of water onsite. This water savings would afford some degree of protection for the groundwater-dependant riparian, marsh, and mesquite habitat occurring at the eastern extent of the refuge. Reclamation, FWS, Scottsdale, and AGFD are working to decide whether a mutually beneficial opportunity exists to obtain an interest in the land and water for LCR MSCP-related program goals.</p> <p>Reclamation evaluated Planet Ranch to determine the maximum acreage and habitat types which could be created in support of the LCR MCSP, while minimizing the risks to the habitat at the refuge downstream. A report, entitled “Planet Ranch: Potential Habitat Restoration Site, Preliminary Site Assessment and Conceptual</p>

Design” was completed in FY05, which details the methodology and assumptions used in the assessment.

Tetra Tech has been retained to establish river cross sections along the Bill Williams River. One of the primary purposes of this data collection effort is to facilitate future hydraulic modeling (FLO-2D) on the river, which would provide a basis for determining the extent of potential habitat protection credit that may be available, should the property be purchased for habitat restoration.

Tetra Tech will accomplish the proposed tasks with their in-house staff. The primary components of the project are river cross section surveys and establishing end point coordinates. Access to some reaches of the river and proposed cross section sites may be an issue, particularly access to some canyon reaches, due to physical access issues, as well as potential weather and flooding issues. In these reaches, cross section coverage will be limited. Cross sections will be surveyed at a variety of flows through the use of all-terrain vehicles and/or small data collection boats.